



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

16th November 2021

Humza Yousaf MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Our Reference: AC-JR

Ambulance Crisis

Dear Humza,

I am writing in regards to Scotland's escalating ambulance crisis and the effect this is having in areas like the one I represent. I am aware this is a situation you have been closely monitoring and that you recently gave a statement to the Parliament. However, whilst I would agree with you that our ambulance services are facing unprecedented demand, I believe the roots of the crisis go far beyond the pandemic.

There are no shortcuts when it comes to solving this crisis: the Royal College of Emergency Medicine has said 1,000 extra hospital beds are needed to relieve the bottlenecks experienced at A&E. The Royal College of Nursing Scotland say the number of vacancies within the NHS have reached "record levels".

There is a clear correlation between the underfunding and understaffing of key services and the difficulties we face. Between 2011 and 2018, real terms funding for day-to-day fell by 6%. The subsequent funding increases that have been announced still represent a 2% reduction per person in 2021-22 compared to 2010-11. We also have 1,200 fewer hospital beds than we did ten years ago. I recognise that the block grant has been cut at points during this period, but the facts are that the political choice the Scottish Government chose to make is austerity.

These cuts have a knock-on effect across the NHS, notably in our ambulance service. An FOI revealed that the median hospital turnaround time for emergency incidents at Inverclyde Hospital in Greenock has increased by 90% since 2014. At the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley, it has risen by 80% on the same metric. In both these examples, the turnaround time has risen with every consecutive year in that time. Similarly, the number of ambulances waiting for more than an hour to transfer sick patients to the hospital is 672 at Paisley in 2021 compared to 147 in 2014, and 132 at Greenock in 2021 compared to 22 in 2014.

I hope you would agree the extent of these increases is shocking. So, I would like to ask specifically what the Scottish Government attributes these long-term increase to? What steps is the Scottish Government taking to address these long-term factors? Will you rule out any further austerity in our NHS?



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I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region